



# News Release

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Ag secretary makes recommendations on biotech policy**

TOPEKA— Secretary of Agriculture Jamie Clover Adams announced today that she sent written recommendations to the Office of Science and Technology Policy outlining how the federal government can improve its regulation of biotechnology derived crops still in the testing phase.

“This is an important issue for agriculture and for biotechnology,” Adams said. “My hope is that these recommendations will be incorporated into policy so that the public’s confidence in biotechnology is maintained and farmers growing traditional crops can feel comfortable that their fields are protected from unintended drift.”

Adams submitted comments in response to an Aug. 2 Federal Register notice that summarized proposed federal actions to update field test requirements for biotechnology derived plants. Kansas agriculture associations with a stake in the issue helped Adams identify the key issues most important to their members.

Among the recommendations made by Adams was a requirement that all field test sites and greenhouse facilities be inspected to verify they meet USDA planting guidelines. Currently, one federal inspector is responsible for all biotechnology test sites in Kansas. Adams suggested that entities making application to field test new biotech plants could be charged a fee to fund regulatory program operations. USDA could then contract with states to ensure that all test sites are visited.

Adams also recommended that USDA reevaluate the varying roles states have in biotechnology regulatory programs and seek a consistent level of involvement. She noted that the current federal application process implies close state involvement, although many states, including Kansas, have no mandated responsibilities.

Adams encouraged the Office of Science and Technology Policy to make sure federal regulations for biotech plants still under testing be based on sound science, be well-defined and be designed to reduce the risk of adventitious spread. A solid regulatory framework is needed, she said, to protect domestic and international markets.

The full text of Adams’ comments can viewed online at [www.accesskansas.org/news/OSTP.pdf](http://www.accesskansas.org/news/OSTP.pdf).